

## Executive Director Update

May 11, 2010

May 31, 2010, is fast approaching. May 31 is perhaps the most important date on the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System calendar. This is the last day of retirement season time for those eligible members who have decided this is their final year to work. In order for benefits to become effective July 1, 2010, members must file an application with ATRS no later than May 31, 2010. Retirement applications received after that deadline will push the retirement date forward, to August 1 or later, and the retiree will not qualify for a cost-of-living raise for the first year of retirement. Stated another way, you must be a July 1, 2010, retiree to get a cost of living increase on July 1, 2011.

This year May 31<sup>st</sup> is Memorial Day. Because this date is so important for ATRS members, ATRS offices will be open on Monday, May 31, 2010, from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. for members who wish to drop by our offices and file applications in person. Telephone assistance will also be available. ATRS will also accept a faxed application to meet the filing deadline; however, we do suggest you follow up your fax with a telephone call to make sure the application is received.

***Any retiree who plans to work for any ATRS employer after their effective date of retirement, even if it is for one hour or one day, should check with ATRS to make certain the termination requirements have been met. If the termination requirements are not met, benefits will be cancelled. The termination period begins with the effective date of retirement, not the last day a member works. All retirees effective date of retirement is always a first day of a month. Please do not jeopardize benefits by not checking with ATRS first before you return to work.***

The deadline to begin participation in the T-DROP program for the 2010-2011 fiscal year is also May 31, 2010. The effective date of T-DROP participation will be July 1, 2010.

Members can only begin participation in the T-DROP program on a July 1. This means an application is received after May 31, 2010, cannot become effective on July 1, 2010.

Members may apply for the following year to begin T-DROP participation. Member T-DROP accounts will be credited monthly for a maximum of ten (10) years. Participation continues in that 10 years until employment is terminated or the member retires.

Remember, entering T-DROP at twenty-eight (28) years of service provides a T-DROP reduction of approximately 40%. If you enter T-DROP with twenty-nine (29) years of service, the approximate reduction is lowered to 35%. If you wait until you have thirty (30) years of service, the approximate reduction is lowered to just 30%. There are potential benefits to waiting to enter T-DROP until **after** you have more than twenty-eight (28) years of service.

Forms for retirement or T-DROP can be found on the ATRS website at: [www.artrs.gov](http://www.artrs.gov)

Please look under the member tab, navigate to forms, then Benefits and Counseling.

ATRS may be reached locally at (501) 682-2175 or toll free at (800) 666-2877. The number for faxing applications is: (501) 682-1812.